



# NEWS

October 2020

## Hertfordshire Natural History Society – Herts Bird Club

This newsletter is being mailed out at the same time as the *Hertfordshire Naturalist 2020*. This year has been made difficult and worrying for everyone by the continuing Coronavirus pandemic. We, nevertheless, hope that members have found opportunities to enjoy and record wildlife from their homes and outdoors. The HNHS website will continue to report on the implications for recording activity of changing Government rules.

### HNHS journal archive goes 'live' online!

We are excited to announce that the Society's *Transactions*, dating back 145 years, can now be read and searched online. Starting with an 1875 lecture on 'The Cretaceous Rocks of England' given to the newly-formed Watford Natural History Society and Hertfordshire Field Club, the digital archive extends to 2009 – when the cover of the *Hertfordshire Bird Report 2007* featured a colourful Hoopoe. The collection is accessible on the website and will be updated annually with a further year's editions of the *Hertfordshire Naturalist* and *Hertfordshire Bird Report*. Instructions are provided on how to carry out and refine searches.

The digital archive provides a splendid reference resource through which Hertfordshire's changing natural history – and attitudes to wildlife recording and protection – can be traced. The 'digitisation' project has taken three years and required 15,200 pages and 5.5 million words to be scanned, of which 60,000 required manual spell-checking. The Society is very grateful to the volunteers who undertook the latter task, led by **Ian Carle** who oversaw the entire project.

### Commemorating Trevor James

Everyone who knew **Trevor James** – the county recorder for flora and beetles for more than 40 years – will have shared the deep sense of loss that followed his death from cancer in June. An obituary and tributes can be found online and in the new edition of the *Hertfordshire Naturalist*. The management committee is actively considering other ways in which Trevor's remarkable contribution to natural history in Hertfordshire can best be commemorated.

### Safeguarding children and at-risk adults

We have recently updated our policy on safeguarding children, young people and at-risk adults who take part in the Society's activities. It is especially important that anyone organising field work or events visits the website to read and implement the policy. However, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, so please take time to read about the principles and practices we will apply when concerns are raised.

### Start of dragonfly survey postponed

The continuing Covid-19 emergency means that the start of Hertfordshire's second county-wide survey of damselflies and dragonflies has been postponed until 2021. We, nevertheless, know that some members have been taking the opportunity of fine summer and early autumn days to hone their identification and photography skills in preparation for the next five years. We also hope it may prove possible to organise some identification workshops once the survey gets under way. Meanwhile, *Dragonflies and Damselflies of Hertfordshire* (2009) from the first survey is still available for purchase via the website for £5 plus p&p.

The mammals, amphibians and reptiles atlas – **Herts MARA** – survey is also being extended for a further, final year because this year's fieldwork was curtailed.

### Taking the 2020 AGM online

Continuing restrictions on indoor meetings mean that both the **HNHS Autumn Conference** and the **2020 Gerald Salisbury Memorial Lecture**, scheduled for November, have had to be cancelled. The Society's Annual General Meeting, which would normally be incorporated into the Autumn Conference will now go ahead as an online event. It is planned to schedule this towards the end of November. Details, including a possible speaker, are currently being agreed. These will be circulated as soon as possible with papers for the meeting and copies of the Society's accounts for 2019-20. Please note that to minimise costs, the AGM calling notice and accounts **will be sent electronically** to all members who have given us an email address. Others will receive their papers by post, including details of how to vote by proxy on the accounts, committee nominations and any other resolutions, assuming they are unable to take part in the meeting online.

### Last call for 2020 subscriptions

All HNHS and Bird Club subscriptions fell due on 1 January. **Geoff Hill**, our Membership Secretary, is keen to hear from any members who have not yet renewed. If you have not already done so, please consider setting up an annual standing order. Rates for 2020 are unchanged: Family £22, Individual £18, Bird Club only £12, HNHS receiving only the *Hertfordshire Naturalist* £12